

## AMHERST SCHOOLS Fiscal Year 2014

### AMHERST SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Katherine Appy, Chair      Amilcar Shabazz  
Rick Hood                      Kathleen Traphagen  
Lawrence O'Brien

The Amherst School Committee is an elected body responsible for the public education of all children in kindergarten through grade six and of pre-school children with substantial special needs in our community. The Committee meets regularly on the third Tuesday of each month and welcomes citizen participation at each meeting. The members of this committee also serve as Amherst's members of the Regional School Committee which has responsibility for the educational programs for children in grades seven through twelve.

### STUDENT ENROLLMENT

The following demographic data is based on official enrollment numbers as of October 1, 2013.

	Crocker Farm	Fort River	Wildwood	District Totals
<b>Preschool</b>				
Total Enrollment	65	N/A	N/A	65
Special Education	26	N/A	N/A	26
ELE	0	N/A	N/A	0
Free/Reduced Lunch	24	N/A	N/A	24
<b>Kindergarten</b>				
Total Enrollment	59	40	53	152
Special Education	3	5	7	15
ELE	16	12	8	36
Free/Reduced Lunch	31	19	19	69
<b>Grade One</b>				
Total Enrollment	43	59	63	165
Special Education	3	13	5	21
ELE	6	9	14	29
Free/Reduced Lunch	18	20	27	65
<b>Grade Two</b>				
Total Enrollment	57	55	48	160
Special Education	6	11	9	26
ELE	9	14	2	25
Free/Reduced Lunch	18	25	19	62
<b>Grade Three</b>				
Total Enrollment	54	38	49	141
Special Education	11	9	7	27
ELE	12	7	7	26
Free/Reduced Lunch	24	19	21	64
<b>Grade Four</b>				
Total Enrollment	45	61	61	167
Special Education	7	13	12	32
ELE	6	5	6	17
Free/Reduced Lunch	9	24	20	53
<b>Grade Five</b>				
Total Enrollment	66	56	69	191
Special Education	16	12	14	42
ELE	8	8	5	21
Free/Reduced Lunch	27	17	22	66
<b>Grade Six</b>				
Total Enrollment	46	59	64	169
Special Education	11	14	10	35
ELE	6	7	2	15
Free/Reduced Lunch	18	15	25	58
<b>TOTALS</b>				
Total Enrollment	435	368	407	1210
Special Education	83 / 19%	77 / 21%	64 / 16%	224 / 19%
ELE	63 / 15%	62 / 17%	44 / 11%	169 / 14%
Free/Reduced Lunch	169 / 39%	139 / 38%	153 / 38%	461 / 38%

Sixty-three children from Amherst attended Charter Schools and 23 Amherst children attended other school districts under the School Choice program.

## **2013-2014 HIGHLIGHTS**

The core mission of the Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools is to “provide all students with a high quality education that enables them to be contributing members of a multiethnic, multicultural, pluralistic society.” This informs everything we do as educators, and during 2013-2014, a number of steps were taken toward that lofty goal:

- Each of the four towns in the Regional School District appointed members to the Regional School District Planning Board to continue more in-depth research on the impact of various educational regionalization scenarios for their communities. This group continued its work during FY14, voting unanimously on December 5, 2013 to recommend that the Regional School Committee “amend the current 7-12 agreement to a preK-12 agreement with the option that one of the existing four towns can remain 7-12 as long as that town is not Amherst, and that the town that remained 7-12 has the option to become a preK-12 member within a specified period of time, and that the town that remained 7-12 can negotiate with the Regional School Committee regarding shared superintendency services for their preK-6 school.”
- The district submitted Statements of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority for renovations to Fort River and Wildwood schools. MSBA notified the district in December that Wildwood’s Statement of Interest has been invited to move forward into the MSBA’s Eligibility period, which is the next step in the process.
- The New England School Develop Council presented the results of their Time-on-Learning study to the Amherst School Committee in January 2013. The study identified a shortfall in the mandatory instructional hours in our elementary schools so the Amherst School Committee voted to adopt a consistent schedule with school hours from 8:50-3:10 Monday through Friday. This schedule, which eliminates the long-standing Wednesday early release day in the district’s elementary schools and was implemented this year, provides the required additional structured learning time for all students with no reduction to the weekly time allotted for recess, specials, or lunch.
- Recognizing that the change in the elementary schedule would impact some families’ morning routine and commute, the district implemented a Before-School Care Program to complement the After-School Care Program already in place. The self-supporting program is offered in each of the elementary schools and allows families to drop their child(ren) off as early as 7:30 a.m. Income eligible families are also able to access the Before-School Program at a reduced rate or for free.
- The district’s implementation of the State mandated Educator Evaluation Model for teachers and administrators began last year with the training of all staff and administrators in the new processes and procedures. Under the direction of Michael Morris, Director of Educator Evaluation and Assessment Analysis, implementation of the multi-year roll-out has continued with great success during the 2013-2014 school year.
- The districts’ Steps to Success program was launched in FY 14 and the ARPS Family Center opened, both under the leadership of Dr. Marta Guevara, Director of Achievement and Equity. Dr. Guevara is leading district efforts to assess and improve the work pertaining to family and community engagement and to eliminate barriers to academic success for all students.
- Dr. Cohen is leading the district in curriculum evaluation, K-12 curriculum alignment and alignment to the Common Core Standards. In 2014, areas of focus included implementation of a new standards-based mathematics curriculum in grades seven and eight, introduction of a new science inquiry unit in grades two through five, review of the English Language Arts curriculum in kindergarten and first grade, and review of the K-12 social studies curriculum.

## **Initiatives in 2014-2015**

Some of the highlights of challenges and focus in FY 15 will include:

- To focus on the requirements for Wildwood to move forward in the MSBA process. The Eligibility Period, which precedes potential invitation to participate in the Feasibility Study, is from December 2013 through September 2, 2014. During this portion of the process, the district and Town of Amherst must complete a number of requirements including establishing a School Building Committee and developing Maintenance and Capital Planning information for MSBA. Once this phase is complete, the district will hopefully be invited to move forward into the Feasibility Study period, which will require a great commitment of time, energy, and expertise for the remainder of FY 15 and beyond.
- To implement the next steps required for a potential move from a 7-12 to a Pre-K-12 region.
- To strengthen communication with families and community through means of more regular two-way communication. We will create and implement a Family Communication Advisory Council for the Superintendent and will request routine meetings with PGO Presidents.
- To work collaboratively with our specialists and community partners to create and implement a sustainable arts integration model beginning at the elementary level.
- To strengthen our early literacy programming for all students in K-2 by developing a strong English Language Arts foundation and to realize the goal of having all students reading by second grade.
- To build on our efforts of strengthening instruction. We will implement the principles of universal design and implement specific strategies identified through the voices of our students.
- To focus on the use of time in our schools to include intervention, instructional time per content area, and time for adult development.
- To continue to provide mandated professional development and district/school professional development in a cohesive, embedded manner to support the growth of staff, while minimizing the amount of time out of the classroom. Professional development will be directly linked to the priorities identified by the district and school improvement plans and/or identified staff need in order to create an equitable, positive learning community for all students.
- To continue to implement strategies designed to create a positive school climate and to respond to behavior effectively.
- To continue to create a strength-based family partnership through community events, educational opportunities, and by removing barriers.
- To continue efforts to strengthen, expand, and seek out new partnerships and collaborative initiatives to support our schools.

## AMHERST-PELHAM REGIONAL SCHOOLS Fiscal Year 2014

### AMHERST-PELHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

#### *Shutesbury Representative*

Stephen Sullivan

#### *Amherst Representatives*

Katherine Appy

Rick Hood

Lawrence O'Brien

Amilcar Shabazz

Kathleen Traphagen, Vice-Chair

Kathleen Traphagen, Vice-Chair

#### *Leverett Representative*

Sarah Dolven

#### *Pelham Representatives*

Trevor Baptiste

Dan Robb

The Regional School Committee represents the four communities that comprise the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District: Amherst, Leverett, Pelham, and Shutesbury. It is responsible for the direction and support of the educational programs for students in Grades 7 through 12 from each of these towns. Committee meetings are open to the public, except for executive sessions as prescribed by law, and are held regularly on the second and fourth Tuesday evenings of each month. Opportunity is available at every meeting for public participation.

### STUDENTS

The following demographic data is based on official enrollment numbers as of October 1, 2013.

	Amherst Regional Middle School	Amherst Regional High School	District Totals
<b>Grade 7</b>			
Total Enrollment	223	N/A	223
Special Education	45	N/A	45
ELE	15	N/A	15
Free/Reduced Lunch	60	N/A	60
<b>Grade 8</b>			
Total Enrollment	243	N/A	243
Special Education	50	N/A	50
ELE	4	N/A	4
Free/Reduced Lunch	78	N/A	78
<b>Grade 9</b>			
Total Enrollment	N/A	247	244
Special Education	N/A	39	39
ELE	N/A	12	12
Free/Reduced Lunch	N/A	71	71
<b>Grade 10</b>			
Total Enrollment	N/A	233	233
Special Education	N/A	36	36
ELE	N/A	9	9
Free/Reduced Lunch	N/A	65	65
<b>Grade 11</b>			
Total Enrollment	N/A	234	234
Special Education	N/A	47	47
ELE	N/A	7	7
Free/Reduced Lunch	N/A	68	68
<b>Grade 12</b>			
Total Enrollment	N/A	266	266
Special Education	N/A	52	52
ELE	N/A	19	19
Free/Reduced Lunch	N/A	85	85
<b>TOTALS</b>			
Total Enrollment	468	996	1464
Special Education	97 / 21%	190 / 19%	287 / 20%
ELE	19 / 04%	47 / 05%	66 / 05%
Free/Reduced Lunch	139 / 30%	294 / 30%	433 / 30%

Enrollments on October 1 over the last ten years were as follows:

2004-2005—1,949	2009-2010—1,691
2005-2006—1,924	2010-2011—1,592
2006-2007—1,877	2011-2012—1,546
2007-2008—1,817	2012-2013—1,527
2008-2009—1,764	2013-2014—1,464

In addition, 38 Regional students were enrolled in Vocational Schools as of October 1, 2012. Twenty-four students attended other school districts under the state's School Choice Program, and 69 students were enrolled at charter schools. Tuition for district students to attend these schools is paid by the Regional School District.

### Highlights in 2013-2014

The core mission of the Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools is to “provide all students with a high quality education that enables them to be contributing members of a multiethnic, multicultural, pluralistic society.” This informs everything we do as educators, and during Fiscal Year 2014, we continued to move toward our district-wide long-term goals. To see the plan that guides our work, read *District Improvement Plan: A Blueprint for Continuous Growth*.

- The district successfully hosted the 2013 MSAN Student Conference September 25-28, 2013. ARHS was able to host this national conference, which served more than 250 students from across the country, was made possible with the strong support of UMass and the local colleges, civic organizations and local businesses.
- Calvin Terrell, speaker, educator and community builder, worked with the district in a number of ways during FY 14. In August, Mr. Terrell led the four-day workshop series Diversity, Awareness and Community Leadership Training, which included ARHS students, staff and community leader participants. On September 9 and 10, Mr. Terrell returned to the district and led two sessions of *Cowards to Warriors*, a presentation that examines bullying, prejudices, and diversity. By giving real life scenarios that spark profound introspection on the roles we play with family, friends, peers, and strangers, participants are challenged to examine their actions and inactions. All ARHS students and staff, along with all district Directors and Central Office staff, participated in the presentations. Mr. Terrell served as the keynote speaker at the MSAN Student Conference, which provided the entire community with an opportunity to hear his presentation.
- Each of the four towns in the Regional School District appointed members to the Regional School District Planning Board to continue more in-depth research on the impact of various educational regionalization scenarios for their communities. This group continued its work during FY 14, voting unanimously on December 5, 2013 to recommend that the Regional School Committee “amend the current 7-12 agreement to a preK-12 agreement with the option that one of the existing four towns can remain 7-12 as long as that town is not Amherst, and that the town that remained 7-12 has the option to become a preK-12 member within a specified period of time, and that the town that remained 7-12 can negotiate with the Regional School Committee regarding shared superintendency services for their preK-6 school.”
- Our district is comprised of five union groups, four of which negotiated new three-year contracts in 2013. These groups are as follows: teachers, clerical/media staff, and paraprofessionals which are represented by the Amherst-Pelham Education Association; and assistant principals and district administrators, which are represented by the Amherst-Pelham Administrators Association. Custodial/maintenance staff members are represented by AFSCME/AFL-CIO and they resolved their union contracts prior to the start of FY 13.

- The district's implementation of the State mandated Educator Evaluation Model for teachers and administrators began last year with the training of all staff and administrators in the new processes and procedures. Under the direction of Michael Morris, Director of Educator Evaluation and Assessment Analysis, implementation of the multi-year roll-out continued with great success during the 2013-2014 school year.
- The districts' Steps to Success program was launched in FY 14 and the ARPS Family Center opened, both under the leadership of Dr. Marta Guevara, Director of Achievement and Equity. Dr. Guevara is leading district efforts to assess and improve the work pertaining to family and community engagement and to eliminate barriers to academic success for all students.
- Dr. Rhonda Cohen is leading the district in curriculum evaluation, K-12 curriculum alignment and alignment to the Common Core Standards. In 2014, areas of focus included implementation of a new standards-based mathematics curriculum in grade seven, review of math curriculum in grades 8-12 to ensure alignment with the MA curriculum frameworks and to support the transition to one pathway in the high school, as well as review of the K-12 social studies curriculum, specifically examining the scope and sequence of topics and the integration of the ARPS multicultural curriculum standards. The district is beginning to use an online curriculum mapping tool to update curriculum units to reflect the new MA Curriculum Frameworks and the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards.

### **Initiatives In 2014-2015**

Some of the highlights of challenges and focus in FY 15 include:

- To continue the process of exploring, and potentially implementing, a new educational governance structure based on recommendations by the RSDPB.
- To continue the process of exploring and implementing changes in the use of time at both ARMS and ARHS, beginning with the 2015-2016 school year.
- To focus on the use of time in our schools to include intervention, instructional time per content area, and time for adult development.
- To strengthen communication with families and community through means of more regular two-way communication. We will create and implement a Family Communication Advisory Council for the Superintendent and will request routine meetings with PGO Presidents.
- To create and strengthen our English Language Arts interventions to support all learners.
- To build on our efforts of strengthening instruction. We will implement the principles of universal design and implement specific strategies identified through the voices of our students.
- To continue to provide mandated professional development and district/school professional development in a cohesive, embedded manner to support the growth of staff, while minimizing the amount of time out of the classroom. The professional development will be directly linked to the priorities identified by the district and school improvement plans and/or identified needs in order to create an equitable, positive learning community for all students.
- To continue to implement strategies designed to create a positive school climate and to respond to behavior effectively.
- To continue to create a strength-based family partnership through community events, educational opportunities, and by removing barriers. To continue efforts to strengthen, expand, and seek out new partnerships and collaborative initiatives to support our schools.